

THE REMINDER OF SHAYKH RABĪ AL-MADKHALĪ

An observation of the 16th Ash-Sharīah National Conference.

A valuable experience. An opportunity to sit modestly, seeking knowledge of the religion at the feet of the Scholars of Saudi Arabia – the land of Tawhīd and Sunnah; the land where the light of Islām illuminates from; the birthplace of the final prophet and messenger, Muḥammad bin ‘abdillāh ṣalallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam.

The 16th National Conference held this year, entitled: “Islām, the religion of mercy for the entire creation”, took place at three locations. General lectures conducted in Arabic that were then translated into Bahasa took place at Jakarta Islamic Center (JIC), Koja, North Jakarta (from Saturday 14th July to Sunday 15th July) and the Grand Mosque of Bantul, DIY (on Thursday 19th July). Intensive lessons for the students of knowledge conducted in Arabic without translation took place at Al-Anṣār Islamic Center, Ngaglik, Sleman, Yogyakarta (from Sunday 15th July to Saturday 21 July).

One day before the conference, the town of Ngaglik stole the limelight. Right on Jalan Kaliurang (Jakal) KM 10, 3 alleged terrorists were shot dead by the police. [This occurred] while the location of the conference was at KM 13 which was nearby. Jalan Kaliurang was then closed off by the police. The situation was chaotic while onlookers swarmed the crime scene.

[The situation became] further stifled as hours before the conference in Yogyakarta began or after one day in JIC has passed, during the early hours of Sunday (15th July), the khawārij terrorists struck again. [This time] attacking the Indramayu Resort Police Headquarters. A husband-and-wife duo drove through the courtyard and threw a cooking-pot bomb. Seems like the wife got bored of cooking. A loud sound emanated from the impact of the cooking-pot bomb’s contact [with whatever it hit] but there was no explosion. A failed attack – Alḥamdulillāh – so much so that the husband was even shot in the chest.

A conference in the middle of a terrorist attack. Such was the situation of the conference this time. Precise indeed is one of the subtopics [of the conference]: “The Dangers of Terrorism and Radicalism against the Nation and Country”. The lecture was delivered by Shaykh ‘Arafāt bin Ḥasan al-Muḥammadī. He admonished 15,000 Muslims who were present to obey the Muslim ruler, not protest and create unrest and to remain steadfast upon Tawhīd and the Sunnah of the Prophet ṣalallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam.

A like admonition was always given by the scholars in previous conferences. This one [by Shaykh ‘Arafāt] is not to be singled out. [The admonition] served as a reminder to the Muslim youth to not be influenced by the deviated teachings of terrorists, and [served as

a reminder] to the terrorists that they may return to the correct path which accords with the teachings of the Messenger of Allāh ṣallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam.

Besides Shaykh Arafāt, the scholars present were: Shaykh ‘Abdullāh bin Ṣalfīq az-Zafīrī, Shaykh ‘abd I-Wāḥid bin Hādī al-Madkhalī and Shaykh Fawwāz bin ‘Alī al-Madkhalī. Shaykh ‘Abdullāh bin Ṣalfīq was the eldest amongst them. They came to Indonesia following the instruction of Shaykh Dr. Rabī‘ bin Hādī bin Muḥammad ‘Umayr al-Madkhalī. A Sunnī-Salafī scholar from ahl as-Sunnah and a renowned scholar of ḥadīth. He currently resides in al-Madīnah and is deemed to be from the most respected senior scholars of Saudi Arabia.

Shaykh Rabī‘ is approaching 90 years old. He is firmly grounded in knowledge, has authored many books and is very influential and experienced especially in exposing the various misguided sects. He [avidly] reminds the Ummah of the dangers of the different [misguided] ideologies and to remain firm upon propagating the call of Tawḥīd in conformity with the methodology of the Companions of the Prophet ṣallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam, their followers and their followers’ followers – the three generations whom the Messenger of Allāh ṣallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam mentioned as being the best of this Ummah.

On Tuesday evening (17th July), in the midst of the cold Kaliurang hill, after the lesson on the book, “Uṣūl al-Īmān” (The Foundations of Belief) explained by Shaykh ‘Abdullāh bin Ṣalfīq, a teleconference with Shaykh Rabī‘ was held. All four scholars gathered in Masjid al-Anṣār. Also present was the director of Salafī centre in Jember, Ustādh Luqmān Bā‘abduh [who was] sitting by the lecturer's table between Shaykh ‘abd I-Wāḥid and Shaykh ‘Abdullāh bin Ṣalfīq.

Around 900 Indonesian students of knowledge awaited [the call], full of hope, yearning to listen live to the advice of Shaykh Rabī‘. The organising committee announced that supper at the refreshment corner will be delayed until after the teleconference ends. Everyone waited patiently, including myself who was craving for nasi kucing, fried food, sweet tea plus hot herbal tea. For the record, I did not attend [the conference] as a student but merely as an observer and a [former] reporter (smile).

A few seconds after the time reached 20:45 WIB, the phone rang and Shaykh ‘abd I-Wāḥid got ready. Shortly afterwards, he began speaking. The microphone was moved toward Ustādh Luqmān who quickly received it and delivered his introduction. His voice was clear, strong, and full of spirit. Obviously, [the introduction was] in Arabic, not in Jogja language (hehe)..

Soon, the voice of Shaykh Rabī could be heard from the other end of the phone [while he was] 7,925 km away [from us], across the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. He had the exceptional voice of an elderly man, rather hoarse, yet sounded enthusiastic.

Everyone was listening attentively. [The Shaykh's speech] did not last a minute, I reckoned. Shortly after that, Shaykh 'Abdullāh bin Ṣāliḥ delivered a concluding speech. The teleconference came to an end. Alḥamdulillāh. The congregation left the mosque in an orderly manner toward the free refreshment corner.

From the advice of Shaykh Rabi' that night – I got the translation of the Arabic transcript from sahab.net – to himself first and the Muslims was to fear Allāh tabāraka wa ta'ālā; to be sincere for the sake of Allāh in every [instance of] speech and action; to hold firmly to the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of the Prophet ṣallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam; to thread the [path of the] methodology of the Salaf as-Ṣāliḥ (the Pious Predecessors); to uphold the 'aqidah (Islamic creed) which accords with the Islamic Legislation.

[He also advised with] establishing brotherhood for the sake of Allāh; enjoining the good and forbidding the evil; loving Allāh and his Messenger ṣallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam; loving the Noble Companions and the pious and the truthful ones; being enthusiastic in learning the books of Sunnah: collections of aḥādīth by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah etc., [likewise] the books by Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim.

A valuable advice which, once elaborated, will highlight great wisdom, create enthusiasm and [motivate] one to seek knowledge while acting upon it. This year's conference for the students of knowledge had – data of the organising committee reads – 450 students registered and 900 copies of the course book distributed. Registration meant receiving benefits from the organising committee [such as] accommodation and meals. Many other students of knowledge rented houses in groups.

We should be grateful for this routine annual event. It is only through the [study of] authentic religious knowledge under the tutelage of the major scholars will the Muslims be safe from deviation and misguidance. Hopefully this continues to produce generations of muslims who are firm upon the Qurān and Sunnah and gentle in da'wah just like the gentle wind at the foot of the Kaliurang volcano.

📰 Published by: Radar Cirebon Newspaper

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